Kentucky Literacy Link

A Publication of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

Be Still My Grinchy Heart

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Like many people, I find the holiday season especially stressful. The barrage of familial responsibilities and the frivolous spending makes me absolutely grumpy – nay – Grinchy. This year particularly, I've been resisting all holiday cheer and desperately wishing I could sneak into all of the Who houses and steal their wazoos and roast whobeasts in a futile attempt to stop Christmas from coming.

One such Grinchy day, I wandered into my favorite Dollar Tree store and picked up a few reasonably priced items (everything is $1!). I ended up in line behind two other shoppers who had more than my few items. Grinchily I willed another lane to open, or this one to hurry up. I was in a hurry to get nowhere in particular and do things that always needed to be done like homework and laundry.

The woman in line ahead of me kindly let a little old lady cut in front of her since she only had a few items. I growled inwardly.

The cashier announced that the first lady's total was more than $300.

I peered around the ladies ahead of me to see the register, wondering *what on earth* anyone could spend $300 on at Dollar Tree.

Seeing all of our incredulous looks, the woman explained that she was creating "blessing bags" to keep in her car for whenever she happens upon a homeless person. These bags are filled with toiletries, non-perishable snacks, gloves and hats, etc.

I'm pretty sure I could almost see the hearts of everyone in that line growing three sizes. I know mine did.

I realized I could keep complaining about the wastefulness and frivolity of the season, or I could busy myself being the change. The opportunities are all around me just waiting for me to take advantage.

Be the change. Happy holidays!
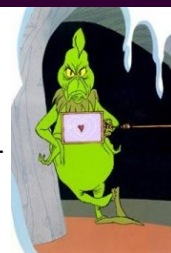
Kentucky Department of Education Updates

Operation Preparation
It is time for Kentucky's middle and high schools to start preparing for Operation Preparation 2014. During March, Kentucky will participate in the third annual Operation Preparation. During Operation Preparation, the community comes together to provide one-on-one advising opportunities for all 8th and 10th graders.

A trained community volunteer will discuss with the student the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and EXPLORE or PLAN results. The volunteer advisor and the student also will discuss the student's career aspirations, required education/training, whether the student is on target to meet his or her goals and whether the student is taking the required courses to prepare him or her for the future. This session will last approximately 20 minutes.

Advising is a key strategy in reaching the goal that all districts have set of increasing their students' college- and career-readiness rates by 50 percent by 2015. In 2013, 114 districts participated in Operation Preparation; we hope that all of Kentucky's 8th- and 10th- grade students will have the opportunity to participate in 2014.

PGES
PGES webcasts occur monthly. Webcasts include current implementation information, updates and resources for CIITS/EDS, and frequently asked questions from the field.

All live webcasts are viewed via mms:/video1.education. ky.gov/encoder3a. All archived KDE webcasts can be found on the KDE Media Portal.

Program Review Data Release
District assessment coordinators received Program Review scores in an e-mail Oct. 16 to be shared in districts and allow schools to review and report issues and concerns with data. KDE released a media brief Oct. 31 to announce the posting of Program Review scores in Open House. These scores may be viewed in "Other Data" on the Open House Web page. The briefing packet, also found on the Web page, provides state, district and school data.

For more information about the results from the Program Reviews, please see the news release. For more general information, see Commissioner Terry Holliday's blog. Contact Todd Davis with any questions.

Spotlight: Hardin County–Building Literacy in Little Ones

Carlena. A. Sheeran is the director of Early Childhood for Hardin County Schools and member of the Hardin County Community Early Childhood Council.

The Hardin County Community Early Childhood Council (HCECC) uses countywide data to assess the unique needs of early care and early childhood education programs across Hardin County and explores creative ways to address those needs. T

he council builds upon existing strengths and collaborative relationships by providing professional development, technical assistance and resource materials to programs and agencies to effectively promote communitywide understanding of Kentucky's definition for school readiness. Kathy King and Sandra Maldonado serve as HCECC co-chairpersons.

The HCECC convened in 2001. During the ensuing years, the council developed and conducted multiple trainings and distributed appropriate materials to increase child care professionals' knowledge of how to include outdoor and/or gross motor activities with literacy-enhancing curriculum in their programs. To encourage and support participa-

tion in the STARS for KIDS NOW Quality Rating System, the council provided mini-grants to purchase program supplies and equipment to enhance quality care. Providers were introduced to Early Childhood screening and assessment tools through multiple training sessions. All regulated child care programs in Hardin County received vouchers for local CPR/first aid certification.

This year, HCECC provided the Second Step early learning program training to preschool and child care programs to address an identified community need in the area of school readiness.

Along with the training and Second Step kits, HCECC purchased eight age-appropriate books for each of the 74 regulated child care programs in the county centers. The books serve as a support for early literacy efforts and as a heartfelt thank you to the important work child care teachers perform every day.

The books were selected to enhance early literacy. Those books were:

- *Goodnight Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann
- *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox
- *Alexander and the Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst
- *My Mouth is a Volcano* by Julia Cook
- *When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang
- *Chika Chika Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr.
- *We All Sing With the Same Voice* by J. Phillip Miller and Sheppard M. Greene
- *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle

We are always looking for opportunities to help child care and preschool centers in their efforts to increase school readiness in young children.

Technology Critique: Voki

Benjamin Stephens teaches computer lab at Auburndale Elementary in Jefferson County.

Voki allows the user to create an online avatar. Here is an example of how I used it with our Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) students. I was very impressed with the amount of research and planning the students were willing to go through to make their Voki as strong as possible.

Immersion
To be fair, this site is not meant to present core content, but rather as a tool to share knowledge. As far as technology content goes, it does require students to work on audio recording, visual design and possibly even an introduction to html coding.

Engagement
Students love this tool! There are nearly limitless possibilities of what a Voki can be. The user can change the background, voice, framing and just about anything to do with their avatar's appearance. Allowing students to use a microphone to do their own recordings is totally worthwhile. I was impressed with the students' editing skills when they knew their voice was going to be broadcast.

Ease of Use
This does require an account log-in to save your work. Some of the controls can be fairly complex, and it can be tricky to save changes. There are times when students have lost work

because they did not follow precise directions. Overall, it is pretty easy to use for the product that you get in the end.

Demonstration
As I mentioned, this site is not designed to present material. Also, I am not aware of any tutorials or demonstrations within the site. The buttons and tools are fairly self-explanatory for older students.

Approximation
I love this site for struggling writers. The Voki will not show the typed text, so students are given a chance to get their ideas across without worrying about every writing convention. In fact, if the student is allowing the computer to read the script, it is

suggested that the spelling be phonetic.

Response
This a great way to ask students to synthesize their learning. For example, students can make a Voki about what a key character would have said about various historical events. Also, there is a limit on how much a Voki can say, so the students have to work on being succinct.

Multi-Modality
There is a visual element, but students choose from a defined list of attributes. To me, a Voki really focuses on the audio mode. This is one reason I strongly recommend using a microphone for the site. It is a lot of fun when students try new voices to help bring their Voki to life.

Vocabulary in Career and Technical Education

Teresa Rogers is a KDE literacy consultant. Rogers has taught nursing, health sciences, elementary reading and writing, and high school English. In the February 2013 issue, Rogers began a series on literacy in career and technical education (CTE). She continues here with part seven of that series. For more information, visit her Literacy in Career and Technical Education website.

"Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world." – Steven Stahl

It should come as no surprise to any of us that research shows a direct link between word knowledge and comprehension. As teachers, we know that students who understand the vocabulary typically understand the content much deeper than those who do not. However, just knowing the word is not enough; students also must know how to use the word appropriately in context.

Because of the extensive vocabulary demands of technical classrooms, it is critical that we understand and implement strategies that have been proven to be most effective. But the question is, "What type of instruction works best?" In *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement: Research on What Works in Schools*, Robert Marzano describes a strategy referred to as the six-step process.

The first three steps require explicit instruction by the teacher. First, the teacher provides a clear description, explanation and/or example of the term. Rather than providing a textbook definition, it's important to guide students to make connections through images, relationships, non-examples, etc.

The second step is to ask students to restate the word and the description, explanation or examples in their own words with a partner. Next, ask students to create a visual representation of the word. A useful tool for this is the Frayer Model. To use, provide students with or draw the organizer for students to copy. Begin by modeling the use by completing the frames as a whole group, gradually releasing the responsibility to the students as their skill develops.

Providing multiple opportunities to use the words is the key to long-term retention. The remaining steps reinforce this concept. Marzano suggests students regularly engage in activities to help foster knowledge of the vocabulary terms. Provide time for students to discuss the terms with one another. In classroom and lab discussions, encourage the use of correct terminology, mirroring that of the workplace.

Finally, students are never too old to enjoy games. Creating games or using online resources such as www.quizlet.com deepens understanding and actively engages students. Reinforce learning from the activity by focusing classroom talk on metacognitive skills, like "What were the most difficult terms to remember?" or "What helped you to remember this word?"

It's important to remember that "dependence on a single vocabulary instruc-

tion method will not result in optimal learning" (NICHD 2000). Instead, instruction must be explicit, providing multiple modes of interactions with vocabulary to develop the skills necessary to read and comprehend complex text. For more ideas on how to foster vocabulary skills in CTE, visit www.cteliteracy.com.

References

A Review of the Current Research on Vocabulary Instruction
www2.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/rmcfinal1.pdf

Marzano, Robert. "The Art and Science of Teaching / Six Steps to Better Vocabulary Instruction." ASCD, Sept. 2009. www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept09/vol67/num01/Six-Steps-to-Better-Vocabulary-Instruction.aspx

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel.* www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/smallbook.htm.

Definition (in own words)	Facts/Characteristics/Images
	Word
Examples	Non-examples

Find LDC Modules through CIITS and LDC's Website

New Exemplary Modules
This past summer, Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) teachers and coaches identified seminal texts and core ideas in English/language arts (ELA), science, and social studies (including Appendix B of Common Core Literacy Standards) to create exemplary modules that other teachers can use "as is," adapt to their own school setting and

students or use as inspiration to create their own modules.

Check out the new ELA Modules, History/Social Studies Modules and Science Modules, which are posted on the LDC website.

LDC Resources in CIITS
Are you looking for LDC modules from Kentucky teachers? Log onto CIITS and use search term "LDC"

to find many new uploaded materials: Good to Go Modules, Lesson Planning Templates, LDC Framework, 1.0 Guidebook, Videos and Teaching Tasks.

On the Horizon: New LDC Technology Tools and Resources
LDC will launch its new website in January, which will include:

•   A more effective and effi-

cient teacher workflow

•   New content management and collaboration tools

•   An expanded bank of instructional assignments, related teacher reference materials and sample student handouts.

New Literacies with Social Studies Content

This article was written by Bill W. Simpson of McCreary County Middle School and Jennifer Simpson of the University of the Cumberlands. Bill Simpson has taught social studies and language arts at the middle school level for more than a decade. He teaches 8th-grade American History at McCreary County Middle School. He also teaches education classes as an adjunct professor at University of the Cumberlands. Before becoming a professor, Jennifer Simpson participated in the English/Language Arts Leadership Network, was a part of the Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project (EKU-Cadre II), was a Reading First state trainer and worked at McCreary Central High School as literacy coach.

This is the second part of a two-part article. For part one, see November's *Literacy Link*.

READER'S NOTEBOOK
Standard (RH.6-8.2) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source: provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Reader's notebook is an effective way for checking to make sure students comprehend texts. Informational texts often feature headings and subheadings, each representing a main idea or concept connected to the larger topic. The strategy below encourages logical organization of the main idea and supporting facts while encouraging student self-monitoring with a self-check component.

| Topic	Theme	Two Facts	Effect	Scale of Understanding
Battle of Saratoga	Turning point of the war	1. Fought in Oct. 1777	Brought France into the war	4

In the above example, the student would list the heading and/or subheadings under "topic"; the central theme of the reading passage would be listed under "theme"; the student would then scan the passage to find two facts regarding the topic; the student would write down why the event or topic is important or what happened because of the event in the column labeled "effect"; and, finally, the student would rate their level of comprehension from the passage using a scale of 1-5, with 5 meaning they feel they have an exceptional comprehension of what they read. The teacher will review the Reader's Notebook and use it as a springboard to ask follow-up questions of all students and to individualize questions for specific students.

WORD WEB
Standard (RH.6-8.4) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Reading in Social Studies is based on the student's ability to make connections, thereby reinforcing what the student has read and how it relates to the topic or subject being taught. The brain naturally categorizes what we read and the understanding of relationships between categories is essential for content reading. Thus, students must understand key vocabulary in a text. In the Word Web, the student places the key word in the center and then fills

in the required connecting bubbles accordingly. For the middle school student, there are 4 bubbles; this will increase for high school students. An example is illustrated below.
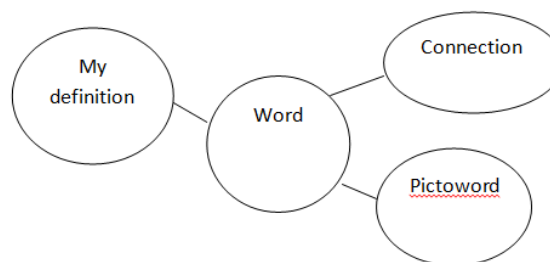
The key word or phrase is written in the center bubble. If the key concept was "Age of Exploration," the student would simply insert that in the bubble. Next the student must think of a picture, chart, or symbol that will remind them of a practical meaning of the word or phrase. Beware that in this part of the activity students often want to take a shortcut and draw a stick person and call it Christopher Columbus. Since the same stick person could be Winston Churchill, John Adams, or Ghengis Khan, there are no drawings of people allowed in this bubble. This is important because it forces students to think in an abstract manner about representations of the vocabulary. The drawing could be a ship, a compass, a map, or anything else the student could reasonably justify.

The "my definition" bubble should be filled with the student's original definition of the word or phrase; it cannot be copied from the book. Finally, the "connection" bubble is meant to attach this word/phrase to other content knowledge that the student has learned. In this example, the bubble could include contemporaries of Columbus such as Magellan or could feature the ships of Columbus. The possibilities are endless.

Just as all students are individuals, so are teachers. Some strategies appeal to us, while some may not. Use the strategies we have discussed for middle school social studies students as needed in your particular situation. It is best practice to rotate the strategies so they do not become stale to students. By varying strategies, many of which accomplish similar purposes, they will remain fresh and challenging classroom tools.

Ideas for modifications and extensions:
Modifications: Have students work in pairs. Create numerous examples prior to the lesson and have students select the best two examples and explain their selections. Provide partially filled-in templates for scaffolding.
Extensions: (see part 1)Have students create an entire Fakebook page. Who would be the historical figure's friends? What pictures would they post? How would they describe themselves? Create an Instagram/Photo sharing account for a historical figure using Google Images and clipart or the student's original artwork.

Reference:
Heller, R., Greenleaf, C. 2007. " Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement." Alliance for Excellence in Education.

Formative Assessment That Truly Informs Instruction

Cindy Parker is the literacy coordinator for KDE., Past-President of the Kentucky Reading Association, and president-elect of the Assembly of state Coordinators of E/LA. Parker has been in education since 1988, serving as an English teacher for 20 years and earning a National Board certification in Adolescent and Young Adult E/LA. At KDE, she leads the KY Literacy Team work, oversees federal, state and foundation funded literacy initiatives, and serves on committees related to teacher preparation, teacher effectiveness, and college-and-career readiness.

The Kentucky Department of Education has long sought to encourage balanced assessment practices throughout the state. KDE was very intentional several years ago in selecting the *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* (or CASL) text to be the common and foundational source for developing assessment literacy statewide – enabling common language and processes. In the summer of 2009, KDE launched a series of 15 two-day "facilitator trainings" led by the Assessment Training Institute leaders for every district in the state.

Over the next year, KDE worked with teams from approximately 150 of Kentucky's school districts to develop their capacity to lead learning teams in studying CASL and implementing assessment literacy. We continued that same emphasis – only going deeper – by making CASL an integral component of our leadership networks beginning in 2010.

The first year of networks devoted significant time to the study of the CASL text. That work continues to be a pillar of the networks, now with science leaders. Recently the National Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts (NCTE) released a

position statement on formative assessment that teachers may find useful in their work and as a complement to the CASL work.

Formative Assessment That Truly *Informs Instruction*,written by the NCTE Task Force on Assessment and approved by the NCTE Executive Committee, is available in a print-able booklet format and html Web page format.

Formative assessment is a constantly occurring process, a verb, a series of events in action – not a single tool or a static noun. For formative assessment to have an impact on instruction and student learning, teachers must be involved every step of the way and have the flexibility to make decisions throughout the assessment process. Teachers are "the primary agents, not passive consumers, of assessment information. It is their ongoing, formative assessments that primarily influence students' learning" (Joint Task Force on Assessment, Standard 2).

Formative assessment:
1. Requires students to take responsibility for their own learning.
2. Communicates clear, specific learning goals.
3. Focuses on goals that represent valuable educational outcomes with applicability beyond the learning context.
4. Identifies the student's current knowledge/skills and the necessary steps for reaching the desired goals.
5. Requires development of plans for attaining the desired goals.
6. Encourages students to self-monitor progress toward the learning goals.
7. Provides examples of learning goals including, when relevant, the specific grading criteria or rubrics that will be used to evaluate the student's work.

8. Provides frequent assessment, including peer and student self-assessment and assessment embedded within learning activities.
9. Includes feedback that is non-evaluative, specific, timely and related to the learning goals, and that provides opportunities for the student to revise and improve work products and deepen understandings.
10. Promotes metacognition and reflection by students on their work.

Formative assessment might happen "on-the-fly" (during a lesson), "planned-for-interaction" (decided before instruction), and "curriculum-embedded" (embedded in the curriculum and used to gather data at significant points during the learning process).

Working alone or, preferably, with others, teachers review data about individual students or groups of students to plan future learning experiences. For example, teachers may collect a variety of sources of information on a single learner to identify patterns of understanding across the data set; review a class set of work samples or observations to group students for further instruction or to plan learning experiences for the entire group; and/or look back at a variety of points along a student's learning journey to see patterns of growth and to identify important next steps. Data may include samples of student work, notes based on classroom observations, input from other adults including parents and standardized assessment data.

Teachers and administrators together can choose and create tools and strategies that will truly inform practice, support students, and improve learning.

Applications Available for the 2014-15 Kentucky Reading Project

For the 15th year, the **Collaborative Center for Literacy Development** (CCLD) is sponsoring the **Kentucky Reading Project** (KRP), a professional learning initiative for K-5 public school teachers. KRP is a yearlong graduate-level course focused on best practices in research-based literacy instruction. Literacy faculty at

each of the eight state universities provides instruction for the class. The National Center for Family Literacy also provides one day of training in family engagement in literacy.

Teachers who participate in KRP will receive a stipend, professional resources and graduate credit (if desired) upon comple-

tion of the course in May 2015.

There is no cost to the participant, the school or the district. Information and applications will be available on CCLD's website at www.kentuckyliteracy.org after Jan. 1, 2014. You also may contact Cary Pappas at cary.pappas @uky.edu or (859) 257-6118.

Auditions for Governor's Mansion Film

In 2014, the Kentucky Governor's Mansion will be 100 years old and many activities and events are being planned to mark this historic occasion. One of the activities is the production of a children's historic documentary video.

On behalf of First Lady Jane Beshear and the Kentucky Governor's Mansion Centennial Committee, this notice serves as an opportunity for students in grades 4-8 to audition for a part in this children's historic documentary video. It will be used to tell the story of the historic Kentucky Governor's Mansion to children across our state.

Michael Breeding MEDIA is having auditions for this children's historic documentary video for students that would be interested in trying out for a part. Michael Breeding MEDIA is looking for a diverse and talented group of children from grades 4-8. Auditions will be held Saturday, Dec. 14, at 303 Madison Place in downtown Lexington.

To schedule an audition time and to receive directions and audition scripts, students and/or their parents should go to www.michaelbreedingmedia.com and fill out the audition request form.

Click on the option at the top of the page called "Auditions for Governor's Mansion Film."

PD 360 Resource: Strategy for Open-Ended Questions

At Harriet Tubman Elementary in Newark, New Jersey, 5th-grade teacher Yvonne Copprue-McLeod teaches a lesson about reading comprehension and answering open-ended questions using textual evidence.

Copprue-McLeod's strategy for her lesson is to have students work in groups, using specific details from the text to draw inferences and answer questions about the main character in the text. This lesson is aligned with multiple 5th grade Common Core ELA standards (RL.5.1, RF.5.4, SL.5.1, SL.5.4).

Throughout the lesson, Copprue-McLeod observes her students' discussions and helps them by stepping in where necessary to clarify a point or to ask guiding questions that will help students dive deeper into the text.

Watch the video here. Learn more about Common Core-focused classroom lessons by viewing video segments in the Common Core in the Classroom program on Common Core 360.

Can't log in to PD 360 or forgot your password? Call (855) 338-7500 or e-mail support@schoolimprovement.com.

Tips from the International Reading Association for Finding Informational Texts

One of the quickest methods for getting informational reading materials into a classroom is through the use of student-written books or local text. Local text is any text that is developed by the students within the classroom.

Encouraging students to write and share within the classroom can begin at a very young age through drawing and dictated words, and can continue through all age levels.

To create local text, teachers can have each student develop a book about himself or herself. This book can be completed solely in the classroom and then shared with parents or can be created as a bridge activity between school and home. Using the Stapleless Book interactive from ReadWriteThink.org can give students a framework for putting together pages. Students can share pictures of themselves, their family, their pets and their home in one book, and then share likes or dislikes such as favorite food, scariest moment and proudest accomplishment in another.

Local text does not have to be fancy or bound in any certain fashion and can be as simple as a set of classroom pages in a report cover and stapled together. These books can then be added to the classroom library or used as a reader's theatre.

Using the students' work helps to show them that their work matters and builds early connections between stories and printed words. While local text is not the only type of informational text that a classroom needs, it provides a simple place to begin bringing in this type of reading.

Letters About Literature Writing Contest

Letters About Literature (LAL) is a reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to that author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally. Letters are judged on state and national levels. Tens of thousands of students from across the country enter Letters About Literature each year. Students in grades 4-12 are eligible to enter the Letters About Literature reading and writing contest.

LAL awards prizes on both the state and national levels. Each participating state center has its own panel of judges who select the top essayists in the state. State winners will receive a cash award and advance to the national-level judging. A panel of national judges for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will select one national winner per competition level to receive a $1,000 cash award. The judges also will select one national honor per competition level to receive a $200 cash award. Grades 9-12 entries must be postmarked by Dec. 10, 2013. Grades 4-8 must be postmarked by Jan. 10, 2014.
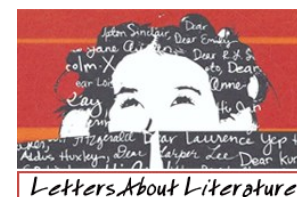
Click here for the LAL teacher's guide. Read previous national-winning entries here. Read our state winners in the *May 2013 Literacy Link*. Click here for rules and guidelines.

New High School Feedback Reports

The Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics (KCEWS) just released its new 2013 High School Feedback Reports. Read the reports here.

Kentucky is known for providing college-going data to its high schools and districts, but this report is special. For the first time, KCEWS breaks through the idea that getting people to enroll in college is not enough and delves into how well students actually do when they get there. College enrollment is an important step, but students also need to earn passing grades and complete enough college hours to ensure they are progressing toward a degree or other credentials. For the first time KCEWS feedback reports show some of these metrics.

Key Findings
There was a minor decrease in the college-going rate for the 2010-11 high school class, but the actual number who graduated and enrolled in college increased. More than 60 percent of Kentucky's 2010-11 public high school graduates attended some form of higher education in 2011-12. Considering that Kentucky is a state where only one out of every five adults aged 25 and older has a bachelor's degree or higher, the fact that three out of five of our high school gradu-

ates go to college is an impressive accomplishment.

However, going to college is only the first step. We want students to be successful after they get to college. KCEWS followed the previous class into its first year of college and reported back on their grade-point averages (GPAs), how many hours they earned and whether or not they returned for their second year. The majority of students who attended college for their first year did return for a second year, but only 15 percent completed a full year of college-level credit (30 or more hours) meaning that 85 percent were no longer on track to complete their degree or credential "on time."

Adding in the performance information helps to illustrate how important it is for students to be ready for college-level work. The average first-year college GPA for students who weren't assessed as ready for college-level coursework was just above passing (2.01). Those same students earned less than half of a year of college credit (14.4 credit hours) during that first year.

One of the more interesting and potentially

useful sets of information for schools is the comparison between high school and college grades on page 5 of the report. In addition to general GPA comparisons, KCEWS was able to provide a comparison of math, English and science grades during these graduates' senior year of high school and their first year of college. This is a rough indicator of alignment between high school and college expectations and will allow schools to dig deeper into questions about how well students are prepared for the expectations of college. This provides some basic information about where to start looking for areas to improve.

There is a considerable amount of data in each of the reports. KCEWS is developing some additional instructional materials to help people understand and use the information.

The Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics' goal is never to just create the data and reports – it's to make sure the information is used to help improve our education, training and workforce programs in Kentucky. Please contact kcews@ky.gov with any questions. Visit the KCEWS website for more information.

Upcoming Literacy Events Around Kentucky

KCTE/LA Annual Conference
The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts will host its annual conference Feb. 21-22, 2014. Entitled "Bridging the Literacy Gap," the 78th anniversary conference will be held at the Embassy Suites Lexington. For more information and to register, visit its website.

The Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Program
The Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teachers' Program has been a professional development opportunity for secondary school educators since 1985. Hundreds of English educators from every state in the nation have taken part in this exemplary program.

The Holocaust is now mentioned in virtually all textbooks and is included in most state social studies standards. Literary anthologies used in countless English/language arts classes across the United States now include works by Holocaust survivors or writers who select the Holocaust as a theme for

their works. Hence, this professional development program can serve a very important role in helping both social studies and English teachers in Kentucky study and teach about this history.

To learn more about this opportunity, please click here or contact Program Coordinator Stephen Feinberg. Visit the program website at www.amgathering.org.

Kentucky Content from PBS LearningMedia
All about Kentucky in one place: PBS LearningMedia has published its Kentucky in the Classroom collection within PBS LearningMedia. This is where you will find all cross-curricular resources (videos, interactives, etc.) pertaining to Kentucky. It will continue to add more as they are produced. PBS LearningMedia is one of three repositories in KET EncycloMedia.

GT Conference, Call for Presentations
The Kentucky Association for Gifted Educa-

tion's (KAGE) Annual Conference is Feb. 24-25, 2014, at the Griffin Gate in Lexington. The call for proposals and other conference information can be found on the KAGE Web page at www.kagegifted.org. For more information, contact KAGE or call (270)745-4301.The deadline for proposals is Dec. 20.

Fund for Teachers Grant
Teachers committed to expanding their knowledge and increasing student engagement are invited to apply for 2014 Fund for Teachers grants. These grants allow pre-K-12 teachers to design and pursue summer learning experiences that meet specific learning gaps – theirs and/or their students'. The online application is due by 5 p.m. Jan. 30, 2014. Examples of previous fellowships, the scoring rubric and online application are available here.

Systemic Support for Family and Community Engagement Practices

Bonnie Lash Freeman is an education specialist for the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL).

I have the opportunity to work with a vibrant group of family liaisons during the upcoming year to co-create a dynamic professional development experience. A forward-thinking school district placed a full-time staff person devoted to engaging families in each of its Title I elementary schools and a few of its middle and high schools.

On a recent visit, one of the seasoned liaisons commented that she knew a lot of activities for parents, but she was most interested in how to systemically ensure that family engagement was a part of her school. "What must I – must we – do to ensure families are not an afterthought?"

I struggle with this question as well. I hear my mother's voice reminding me that "half of knowledge is knowing where to find it." So I turned to researchers and found the most recent family engagement research synthesis published by SEDL – *Working Systemically in Action – Engaging Family and Community*. This document is chock full of information, strategies, checklists, working papers and overall directions to incorporate family and community engagement into the fabric of a school.

The research section of this document, specifically the section entitled "Systemic Support for Family and Community Engagement Practices," provides clear guidance for designing a systemic approach. Using my own set of experiences with schools and families over the last 30-plus years, I will offer some possible examples of systemic inclusion of family engagement practices.

Leadership
Principals and school leadership teams determine the scope of any family engagement efforts. Some examples of what schools and districts are doing are:

- Family and community engagement are outlined in district mission and vision statements and goals.
- Schools create parent advisory boards that focus on curriculum, health/wellness and overall student achievement.
- More than one parent serves on the site-based management team.

- Principals invite parents from various language and cultural groups to serve as parent ambassadors. They also seek membership from other family configurations such as grandparents and foster parents. The primary role of the parent ambassadors is outreach to school families and to solicit communication and contributions.
- Grade-level teams include parent input as they design curricular responses to data.

Long-term and intensive implementation
So very often, family engagement efforts live and die based on the tenure of the principal. Not as many efforts have been created to tackle this aspect of systemic family and community engagement. Some are:

- A few principal-certification programs include family and community engagement as part of their curriculum.
- More teacher-preparation programs include either courses or aspects of courses focused on family and community engagement. Pre-service teachers are rarely asked to develop projects focused on family engagement. The Kentucky Reading Project includes family engagement in the Literacy Action Plans that teachers are asked to develop and implement.
- Some schools include family engagement strategies as they develop comprehensive school improvement plans.
- Some schools share class data with family members and use ongoing workshops to develop strategies to support learning at home.

Organized Structures and Practices
Schools design regular processes, such as decision-making, activities and experiences (e.g., schoolwide and grade-level events) with parent input. Examples are:

- Some Title1 schools create a permanent staff position focused on family engagement and student achievement.
- Parents contribute to the development of all events, activities and community outreach based on a review of school-wide and grade-level data.
- Family-focused experiences include transparent connections to student learning, tangible supports to build in-home support capacities and ways to ensure the adults understand the intended curriculum focus with practice.

Clear Goals and Expectations
Every person that influences students is aware of what they are doing and the rationale for every effort.

- Many schools have adopted student-led conferences for intermediate, middle and high school students.
- At some schools, classrooms include confidential examples of proficient and distinguished student work. During conferences, parents are encouraged to compare their student's work to these examples.
- Teachers use examples of student work to explain Kentucky Core Academic Standards to family members.

Collaboration
Everyone (school staff, parents and community members) works together and focuses on developing meaningful family and community engagement strategies that support student achievement. Examples are:

- At one school, teachers, media specialists and parents designed a series of family events. Each event focused on either reading or math. Each event included grade-level parent workshops concentrating on one or two strategies, an opportunity to use the new information or skill with their child and an opportunity to create a tool that supported learning at home. Each of the events included a community resource related to the curriculum focus such as tutoring programs, the public library or community-based agencies.
- The city of Louisville just created a compact with the Jefferson County school district to combine efforts in support of college- and career-readiness.

As you plan for family and community engagement, use the broad categories here to guide your efforts to create a systemic approach. *Working Systemically in Action* is a detailed and comprehensive document with many ideas and supports for establishing family and community engagement as a critical aspect of your school structure.

Take some time to examine this resource and enlist parent leaders to work with you to guide and strengthen students. I look forward to my conversation with the family liaisons when I return next month. Together we, too, will enlist parents and other school staff to design effective and systemic family and community engagement efforts.

If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Cindy Parker – Literacy Coordinator – cindy.parker@education.ky.gov
- Kelly Clark – Literacy Consultant – kelly.clark@education.ky.gov
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Feedback from the Field

Your feedback helps us to tailor the Link *to best meet the needs of teachers. Tell us how you're using it. Tell us what you want to see more or less of. We want to hear from you!* E-mail MK Overstreet.

"I find the *Literacy Link* helpful each month and always share it with my colleagues in other content areas. I wish there was a way to click and share easily rather than having to forward via e-mail."

– Amanda S.

"I look forward to reading your editorials! It's neat to see there's real people behind the curtain at KDE :-)"

– Judy F.

"Thank for the piece about on-demand writing!"

– Shelley M.

Additional Reading and Other Resources

- Mapping the Nation is a new interactive map that pulls together demographic, economic and education indicators – nearly 1 million data points – to show that the United States is a truly global nation. The site also includes related infographics and a toolkit to "help rising generations grasp the opportunities and meet the challenges of the global future."
- World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) now offers an iPad app for educators of the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards. The WIDA standards app contains the content found in the paper version of the *2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards*. Users also will find a description of how to use and understand the WIDA standards and a description of the Features of Academic Language in the WIDA standards. The app requires iOS 6.0 or later. Additional information with iPad screenshots can be found here.

- KET's *Education Matters* recently focused on meeting the challenges of poverty. This program features two panel discussions: a look at the economic, educational, and social policies that impact academic success among students at risk due to poverty; and an exploration of how school, community and family can counter the effects of poverty and help students succeed.
- Mindsteps Inc., an organization that seeks to assist every teacher to become a master teacher, developed a helpful definition of the common educational term *rigor*. Access the definition here.
- The Center for Teaching Quality's Common Core Virtual Workshop Series started in October and continues through February. Facilitated by K-12 practitioners, this weekly series will feature everything teachers ever wanted to know about

Common Core implementation, from text selection to the Next Generation Science Standards. The first webinar ("LDC 101") featured a Kentucky teacher! Click here for more information.

- The National Center on Universal Design for Learning is pleased to announce new resources on the intersection of UDL and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These helpful tools and links illustrate the important way that the CCSS identify *WHAT* educators need to address in their instruction while UDL guides *HOW* to design their instruction. Key resources include a crosswalk on UDL and the Literacy by Design Collaborative (LDC) framework and video examples showing lessons illustrating classroom instruction addressing both the UDL guidelines and CCSS. These free resources are available here.

Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail mikkaka.overstreet @education.ky.gov to submit. Your submissions may be included in the *Literacy Link* to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past *Literacy Links* **on KDE's website:**
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